

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 082374 TOSEC 030106
ORIGIN EUR-12

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UNCLAS STATE 082374 TOSEC 030106

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLE OF MARCH 30, 1978

FOLLOWING IS ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON STAR
UNDER HEADING "CARTER DECIDES TO SEEK SALT BREAKTHROUGH",
BY HENRY S. BRADSHER, STAR STAFF WRITER FROM BRASILIA.
BEGIN TEXT:

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS DECIDED THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE
UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION TO TRY TO MAKE THE
DIFFICULT DECISIONS THAT STILL BLOCK A NEW STRATEGIC ARMS
LIMITATIONS TREATY.
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PAGE 02 STATE 082374 TOSEC 030106

HE PLANS TO SEND SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS R. VANCE TO A
MEETING IN EUROPE IN LATE APRIL WITH SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER
ANDREI A. GROMYKO, ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS TRAVELING WITH THE
PRESIDENT ON HIS TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA.

TALKS ON A NEW SALT TREATY HAVE BEEN INCHING FORWARD ON

TECHNICAL DETAILS SINCE GROMYKO WAS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR NEGOTIATIONS LAST SEPTEMBER. BUT THE TWO SIDES REMAIN SO FAR APART ON SEVERAL BASIC ISSUES THAT POLITICAL LEADERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES WILL HAVE TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK.

CARTER WANTS VANCE TO TRY TO REDUCE AND DEFINE THESE DIFFERENCES NEXT MONTH. THAT MEETING MIGHT THEN LEAD TO A SUMMIT CONFERENCE BETWEEN CARTER AND THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY, LEONID I. BREZHNEV, TO SEEK FINAL AGREEMENT.

OFFICIALS SAY THE MEETING BETWEEN VANCE AND GROMYKO IN A NEUTRAL WEST EUROPEAN CITY, POSSIBLY GENEVA, IS BEING ARRANGED IN SECRECY.

THE MAIN OUTSTANDING ISSUES INVOLVE ATTEMPTS TO RESTRICT FURTHER MODERNIZATION OF STRATEGIC WEAPONRY SUCH AS INTER-CONTINENTAL MISSILES, MEANS OF VERIFYING ADHERENCE TO A TREATY, PERMITTED RANGES OF CRUISE MISSILES AND ASSURANCES THAT THE SOVIET BACKFIRE BOMBER WILL NOT BE DEPLOYED IN A LONG-RANGE ROLE.

CARTER'S DECISION TO TRY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE ISSUES COMES EXACTLY A YEAR AFTER HIS INITIAL APPROACH TO MOSCOW ON A NEW SALT TREATY WAS HARSHLY REBUFFED BY THE KREMLIN.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 082374 TOSEC 030106

WHEN VANCE WENT TO MOSCOW LAST MARCH, HE PROPOSED A MAJOR REDUCTION IN LAND-BASED MISSILES, A VIRTUAL HALT TO FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS, AND OTHER LIMITATIONS INTENDED TO CHECK THE SPIRALING RACE IN INTER-CONTINENTAL ARMAMENTS.

BUT GROMYKO ANGRILY CHARGED THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS TRYING TO RESTRICT THOSE WEAPONS IN WHICH THE SOVIETS CONCENTRATED WHILE GOING AHEAD WITH THOSE IN WHICH THE AMERICANS HELD ADVANTAGES. NEGOTIATIONS BOGGED DOWN. WHEN VANCE AND GROMYKO MET AGAIN IN GENEVA LAST MAY, THEY AGREED ON A THREE-PART PACKAGE.

THE BASIC SALT II TREATY WOULD COVER ONLY BASIC WEAPONS SUCH AS LAND-BASED MISSILES, SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED MISSILES AND BOMBERS, WHILE A THREE-YEAR PROTOCOL WOULD LIMIT MORE CONTROVERSIAL ITEMS SUCH AS CRUISE MISSILES AND BACKFIRE BOMBERS.

A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES WAS TO COMMIT BOTH SIDES TO FURTHER REDUCTIONS AFTER THE FIVE-YEAR TREATY. THE DETAILS THAT EMERGED LAST AUTUMN LEFT SEVERAL MAJOR CONTROVERSIES

ON WHICH CARTER WAS SENSITIVE BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM. HE IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE WANTED TO AVOID A SHOWDOWN ON A NEW SALT TREATY UNTIL THE PANAMA CANAL FIGHT WAS OVER.

THE RECENT ADMINISTRATION VICTORY ON THE FIRST PANAMA CANAL VOTE IN THE SENATE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A SIGNAL TO CARTER TO GO AHEAD AND TACKLE SALT. BUT IT IS CONSIDERED UNLIKELY BY OFFICIALS THAT A TREATY WOULD REACH SENATE CONSIDERATION BEFORE NEXT AUTUMN'S CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS. EVEN IF VANCE AND GROMYKO DO MAKE PROGRESS NEXT MONTH, FINAL DRAFTING OF A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT FOR CARTER AND BREZHNEV TO CONSIDER WOULD TAKE TIME.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 082374 TOSEC 030106

BREZHNEV, WHO LAST SUMMER ADDED THE SOVIET PRESIDENCY TO HIS COMMUNIST PARTY POWER, HAS HAD AN INVITATION TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1974 WHEN THEN-PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON WENT TO MOSCOW. THE TRIP HAS BEEN TIED TO THE SIGNING OF SALT II, ALTHOUGH CARTER HAS OFFERED TO MEET JUST TO DISCUSS THE TREATY AND BREZHNEV HAS SEEMED ALMOST EAGER FOR A MEETING.

WHILE BREZHNEV MIGHT GO TO WASHINGTON FOR A SIGNING, OFFICIALS SAY IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY MIGHT MEET IN EUROPE TO DISCUSS COMPROMISES ON THE KEY TREATY ISSUES BEFORE A SIGNING IS POSSIBLE. END TEXT. COOPER

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